

Places Of Worship



Waste Reduction and Fact Sheet

Waste reduction and recycling in a worship facility that is used by permanent staff, volunteers, congregational officers, and general members poses many challenges. This factsheet is intended to help the worship facility overcome those challenges by describing how to set up a waste reduction program, suggesting waste reduction techniques, and presenting tips for implementing cost-effective recycling programs.

WHY WASTE REDUCTION IS GOOD FOR PLACES OF WORSHIP

Environmental Stewardship - Waste reduction preserves valuable natural resources, reduces the need for landfills, prevents pollution caused by manufacturing products from virgin materials, saves energy, and helps sustain the environment for future generations.

Positive Public Image - The community appreciates organizations that make efforts to reduce waste.

Free Publicity - Join Mecklenburg County's Wipe Out Waste Business Recognition Program and receive free publicity in local media.

Cost Savings - Waste reduction techniques encourage reuse of materials/supplies, rather than buying new; reducing waste can reduce waste disposal service costs.

HOW TO REDUCE, REUSE, AND RECYCLE WASTE

✓ Check the boxes that apply to your business.

Production

- ☐ Develop an environmental stewardship program that stresses the connection between religious teaching and beliefs, everyday living, and good environmental practices
- ☐ Participate in community cleanup and beautification projects
- ☐ Promote caring for the earth in summer camps, vacation Bible school, and field trips
- ☐ Sponsor pollution prevention activities, such as collecting aluminum cans for recycling
- ☐ Produce bulletins and other documents in-house, rather than using a commercial printer, to eliminate extra copies
- ☐ Establish a website for notices and calendars
- ☐ Use overhead projectors in lieu of song books or sheet music
- ☐ Use e-mail and maintain electronic files instead of paper files
- ☐ Receive faxes through computers and print only when necessary
- ☐ Make double-sided copies whenever possible
- ☐ Eliminate unnecessary reports
- ☐ Reuse office supplies, such as file folders and manila envelopes, when possible
- ☐ Reduce use of disposable items such as styrofoam coffee cups where possible
- ☐ Convert scrap paper, outdated forms, and letterhead into memo pads or drawing paper for children
- ☐ Participate in a Commercial Mail Reduction Program (contact Mecklenburg County Waste Reduction for assistance)
- ☐ Practice preventive maintenance on equipment to prolong the service life
- ☐ Borrow, rent, or share items used infrequently such as tools, floor buffers, ladders, decorations, and audiovisual equipment
- ☐ Sell or donate used equipment, furniture, educational materials, sheet music, and songbooks
- ☐ Install hot-air hand dryers in washrooms to replace paper towels or linen rolls.
- ☐ Purchase supplies with minimal or reusable packaging and order items in bulk quantities to further reduce packaging

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- ☐ Buy concentrated cleaning supplies and less toxic materials when possible
- ☐ Ask suppliers to take back unwanted packaging, and use returnable or reusable boxes or crates
- ☐ Collect mixed office paper, corrugated cardboard, aluminum cans, and toner cartridges for recycling
- ☐ Purchase recycled-content products
- ☐ When renovating or retrofitting systems such as heating systems, purchase products and materials that are energy-efficient and made from recycled contents, such as ceiling tiles, carpets, floor tiles, and wallboard

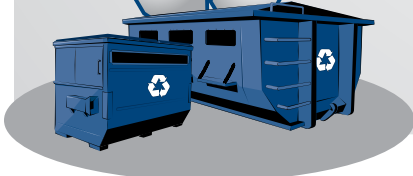
Social Gatherings

- ☐ Ask hosting group or individual to participate in congregation's recycling program
- ☐ Ask invited guests to pre-register or RSVP; an accurate "headcount" can reduce excess food and handouts
- ☐ Reduce use of disposable items by providing coffee mugs, metal utensils, ceramic and glass serving dishes, and fabric table cloths
- ☐ Serve beverages made from concentrates in bulk dispensers and pitchers instead of beverages purchased in individual bottles/cans
- ☐ Place pitchers on each table during seated meals to promote refilling of cups rather than getting new ones
- ☐ Place recycling containers in plain view to make recycling convenient for guests

Food Services

- ☐ Minimize waste by using glassware and ceramic cups and dishes when possible; when using disposable products, use ones that are environmentally friendly and minimally packaged
- ☐ Rotate perishable stocks at each delivery to minimize waste from spoilage. Date all incoming stock and put it at the back of the shelf, so older stock is used first
- ☐ Check perishables usage levels and adjust quantities or frequency of deliveries to minimize waste from spoilage or dehydration
- ☐ Label all materials with contents, storage and handling requirements, and expiration dates
- ☐ Use production charts to minimize over-preparing and unnecessary waste or, when possible, prepare foods only as needed
- ☐ Arrange refrigerated and dry storage areas to facilitate easy access and rotation to minimize waste from spills, breakage, and spoilage
- ☐ Use reusable coffee filters rather than disposable ones
- ☐ Use refillable condiment bottles (ketchup, creamer, sugar, etc.) and refill them from condiments purchased in bulk
- ☐ Buy and use dispenser beverages (juice, tea, hot chocolate) in concentrated or bulk form
- ☐ Use cloth tablecloths rather than disposable paper items
- ☐ Implement a scheduled maintenance program for all your equipment to prolong service life
- ☐ Keep oven equipment calibrated to prevent over-baked products and to maximize energy efficiency
- ☐ Place rubber mats around dishwashing stations to reduce glass and china breakage
- ☐ Collect cardboard, plastic, glass, and steel and aluminum cans for recycling

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- ☐ Donate excess edible food to a local food bank

Grounds Maintenance

- ☐ Use landscape designs and native plants that are in harmony with surrounding ecosystem
- ☐ Develop and maintain community gardens
- ☐ Practice grasscycling (allow grass clippings to fall on the lawn to provide nutrients)
- ☐ Compost yard trimmings or take them to a County compost or yard waste facility
- ☐ Use natural methods of weed and pest control to reduce use of toxic substances
- ☐ Attend a County workshop to learn how to compost, use water efficiently, recycle grass clippings, and reduce the use of toxic substances

HOW TO START A WASTE REDUCTION PROGRAM

1. Commit to waste reduction

A waste reduction program needs a commitment by facility staff and congregational officers. Demonstrate commitment with time and resources. Select a volunteer Recycling Coordinator who is enthusiastic and has good communication and organization skills.

2. Know Your Waste

Determine the types and amounts of waste being discarded. Examine contents of solid waste containers, talk to janitorial staff/solid waste hauler about types of waste and their percentages, or conduct a waste audit (contact Mecklenburg County Waste Reduction for assistance).

3. Choose Waste Reduction Techniques

Decide which waste reduction practices to implement, based on priorities, such as largest portion of waste stream, ease of implementation, convenience to staff, and cost effectiveness.

4. Start a recycling program

- Decide what to collect. Materials commonly collected for recycling include cardboard, mixed paper, and aluminum cans. Other recyclables include newspapers, magazines, telephone books, toner cartridges, plastic bottles, and steel cans. Start the program with a few of these materials and add more over time. Involve staff, volunteers, congregational officers, and members in deciding which materials are to be collected, what collection containers to use, where they will be located (offices, kitchen, vending areas, classrooms, etc.), and where recyclables will be stored before pickup or transport to a recycling center.
- Obtain recycling service that fits your needs. Many recycling service options are available locally and services will depend on types and volume of recyclables. For a complete listing of local recycling vendors, call Mecklenburg County Waste Reduction at 704-336-3777 or 704-336-6087. If contracting with a recycling vendor for pickup is not a costeffective option, collect recyclables and transport them to a recycling center.
- Place recycle containers. Designate specific location(s) for each type of recycle container and require that the container be returned to its designated location after emptying. Explain to staff and frequent visitors how waste and materials are to be segregated and where various containers are located. Label each container on all sides stating types of acceptable materials that can be placed in the container. In assembly and classroom areas, solid waste containers should always be placed near recycling containers to avoid having trash thrown in with recyclables.

5. Involve/Train/Motivate Staff

Involve staff, volunteers, congregational officers, and members in waste reduction. Where you can, supply incentives that will keep them interested and involved. The money saved by reducing waste could be donated to charity or missions or used to fund congregational projects.

6. Monitor and evaluate

Monitor waste and recycling containers to determine what items people are continuing to discard. If you experience low participation rates or if wastes are frequently found in the recyclables containers, review your program's instructions with staff and frequent visitors and ask for their

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feedback. Record the amounts of recyclables recovered from the waste stream and use this data to calculate cost savings and program efficiency. Report progress at general assemblies. Also, review purchase orders to identify opportunities to reduce supplies and purchase bulk or concentrated materials.

RECYCLING OPTIONS

Many recycling service options are available, including the following:

Commingled recyclables and waste (paper, cardboard, and aluminum cans) in same container.

Mixed office paper. Paper is collected in 55- or 90-gallon roll-carts. The carts are rolled to an outside area for pickup.

Cardboard. Cardboard is collected and, depending on volume, placed in an outside collection container or merely stacked. An exterior collection container may require site preparation (e.g., concrete pad, screening, fencing).

Aluminum Cans. Empty aluminum cans are collected separately for transport to: a recycling vendor; County Recycling Center; or schools, fire stations, or charities that collect aluminum cans as fund raisers.

Where To Take Your Recyclables?

Mecklenburg County Commercial Drop Centers:

- Mixed office paper
- Corrugated cardboard
- Bagged aluminum cans

Mecklenburg County Recycling Centers:

- Mixed office paper
- Newspapers, magazines, telephone books
- Flattened corrugated cardboard
- Commingled: #1 and #2 plastic bottles, glass jars and bottles, aluminum/steel/tin cans

Local Recycling Vendors:

- Mixed office paper
- Corrugated cardboard
- Aluminum cans
- Glass bottles and jars
- #1 and #2 plastic bottles

Where To Take Your Yard Waste?

Mecklenburg County Compost and Yard Waste Facilities

- Unbagged leaves, brush, and grass clippings
- Limbs less than 5 feet in length

For a complete listing of County and recycling vendor facility locations and their hours of operation, call Mecklenburg County Waste Reduction, 704-336-3777 or 704-336-6087 or visit <http://www.co.mecklenburg.nc.us/coeng>

EXAMPLES OF RECYCLING IN MECKLENBURG COUNTY

Example 1 – Church has in-house recycling program for aluminum, glass, and corrugated cardboard. The materials are collected in a recycling bin and set on the curb on collection day by church staff. The recyclables are picked up at no additional charge as part of the contracted waste collection and disposal service.

Example 2 – Cathedral with daycare and a commercial style kitchen recycles oil and grease through a local company. The company reuses cooking oil and non-edible food waste.

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Example 3 – Church has in-house recycling program for office paper (includes sheet music, bulletins, and shredded paper) and corrugated cardboard. The materials are collected by the cleaning staff and stored in three rollcarts. Staff transports the 350 to 500 pounds of paper/corrugated each month to a County Recycling Center.

Example 4 – Church collects office paper for recycling. The paper is collected by the cleaning staff and stored in three roll-carts. A local recycling vendor services the carts every two to three months and charges \$75 per quarter.

RECYCLING TIPS

To make a recycling service more cost effective:

Band together with other organizations/businesses in your area. Coordinated efforts can raise recyclable volumes enough to make recycling services affordable.

Piggyback with a large business/organization in your area that is already recycling. Check to see if the large business will allow you to empty recyclables into their large recycling bins.

Ask vendors that bring supplies to your facility if they would make available their trucks to back-haul clean recyclables to a recycling vendor.

Join an existing program. Ask neighboring organizations/businesses if they have recycling programs and if it is possible to join their programs as a partner and share in cost and revenues.

Estimate of Recycling Cost – Cathedral operating a daycare with nine employees generates about 500 lbs. mixed office paper, 800 lbs. corrugated cardboard, and 20 lbs. aluminum cans per month, but does not recycle. The cathedral has an 8-cubic-yard waste container that is emptied twice per week. Monthly cost of recycling, using a vendor for paper and cardboard pickup, is estimated below:

Existing:

Waste Service Fee = \$218

Projected:

Downsized Waste Service*

(weekly pickup of 8-cubic-yard container, estimated 60% reduction in waste volume) = \$109

Paper Recycling Vendor Fee* (Bi-monthly pickup of 2 roll-carts for paper) $2 \times \$23 = \46

Cardboard Recycling Vendor Fee*

(Bi-weekly pickup of 8-cubic-yard container) = \$40

Local Fire Station

(aluminum cans for burn victims) = No Fee Total \$195

Estimated monthly savings \$218 - \$195 = \$23

*based on information obtained from Mecklenburg County waste assessments

Other Potential Recycling Program Costs:

- Staff time/mileage for transport of recyclables to County Recycling Center
- Modifications of janitorial service contracts
- Acquisition of desk-side collection containers and roll-carts

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